Art in French Fiction since 1900

University of Nottingham

11-12 April 2011

Conference supported by

The Society for French Studies

'Art in French Fiction since 1900'

Arts Lecture Theatre, Lakeside Arts Centre, University of Nottingham

Monday 11th April

10am **Registration & coffee**

10.30 **Welcome/ introduction**

10.45-12.15 **Early twentieth-century experiments**
(Chair: Richard Wrigley, University of Nottingham)

Caroline Levitt, Courtauld Institute of Art: 'Monumentality and Marginalisation: Depicting the Arts in Guillaume Apollinaire's "Le Poète assassiné"'
Claire Ghëerardyn, École Normale Supérieure (Ulm)/ Université de Strasbourg: 'La Révolte des statues: enquête sur un nouveau modèle pour le roman d'art'
Silvia Loreti, University of Manchester and Courtauld Institute of Art: 'Representation "Beyond Good and Evil" in Gide's *Faux-Monnayeurs*'

12.15 – 1.30 **Lunch**

1.30-3 **Photography and fiction**
(Chair: Lucy O'Meara, University of Kent)

Kathrin Yacavone, University of Edinburgh: 'Photography and "le jeu des clefs": Barthes, Nadar, Proust'
Akane Kawakami, Birkbeck, University of London: 'No fiction please: Time and Photography in Ernaux and Proust'
Geneviève Guetemme, Université d'Orléans: '*Eros mélancolique* de Jacques Roubaud et Anne Françoise Garetta: écriture, photographie et disparition'

3-3.30 **Tea**

3.30-5 **Femmes peintres, femmes écrivains**
(Chair: Suzanne Dow, University of Nottingham)

Nella Arambasin, Université de Franche-Comté: 'Artemisia et les brodeuses: Michèle Desbordes, Catherine Weinzaepflen...'
Élodie Lacroix di Méo, Université de Bordeaux-III: 'Art, Politics and Female Emancipation in Victor Margueritte's Trilogy *La Femme en chemin* (1922-24)'
Eva Sansavior, Oxford University: 'Fiction into Art/ Art into Fiction: Literature, Art and Criticism in the work of Maryse Condé'

5.15-6.15 **Keynote lecture**

Jean Duffy, University of Edinburgh: 'In the Wake of Trauma: Visualising the Unspeakable in Marie Darrieussecq and Hélène Lenoir'
(Chair: Diana Knight, University of Nottingham)

6.15-7.15 **Vin d'honneur**

8.00 **Conference dinner (Council Room, Trent Building)**

Tuesday 12th April

9-9.30 Registration

9.30-10.30 The nouveau roman and beyond
(Chair: David Gascoigne, University of St Andrews)

Chiara Falangola, University of British Columbia: 'Pour une esthétique de la synthèse: Du jardin d'eau de Claude Monet au *Jardin des Plantes* de Claude Simon'
Gavin Parkinson, Courtauld Institute of Art: 'The Delvaux Mystery'

10.30-11 Coffee

11-1 Dérives et déceptions de l'art
(Chair: Caroline Levitt, Courtauld Institute of Art)

Catherine Howell, University of Melbourne: 'The Deceptive Consolations of Art: Jean-Pierre Milovanoff's *Le Maître des paons*'
Edouard Rolland, University de Paris-I Panthéon Sorbonne: '*Lorsque j'étais une œuvre d'art* d'Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt: Fiction fantastique d'une dérive réelle de l'art contemporain'
David Gascoigne, University of St Andrews: 'Perec's *La Vie mode d'emploi*: or, How to take on painting and win'
Katie Jones, University of Nottingham: '"Brisure et continuité": painting and film in Muriel Barbery's *L'Élégance du hérisson*'

1-2.15 Lunch

2.15-3.45 Contemporary interactions
(Chair: Katherine Shingler, University of Nottingham)

Elisabeth Grodek, McMaster University, 'De l'autre côté du point de fuite: éclosion d'un sous-texte visuel dans quelques romans d'art contemporains et ses implications didactiques'
David Houston Jones, University of Exeter: 'Dado and Claude Louis-Combet: Archival Arts'
Lynsey Russell-Watts, University of Nottingham: 'Stranger than Fiction? The Intermingling of Art and Life in Sophie Calle's *Prenez soin de vous*'

3.45 Tea and end of conference

Abstracts/ résumés

Caroline Levitt, Courtauld Institute of Art: 'Monumentality and Marginalisation: Depicting the Arts in Guillaume Apollinaire's "Le Poète assassiné"'

> 'In the studio, which was like a stable, an innumerable flock lay spread out, they were sleeping paintings and the shepherd who was watching them was smiling at his friend.'
>
> Guillaume Apollinaire, 'Le Poète assassiné', 1916

Apollinaire's semi-autobiographical *roman à clé*, 'Le Poète assassiné', tells of the poet Croniamantal and his entourage of painter friends through encrypted depictions of Picasso, Marie Laurencin and others. Croniamantal's entrance into the Oiseau de Bénin's studio is a magical moment, the apparently romantic nostalgia soon dissipated, however, by Croniamantal's declamation of his latest poems. Art, as represented by Apollinaire, is at once modern, everyday and legendary. The interaction between the arts, supporting each other in the face of persecution, is central to Apollinaire's narrative, as is the marginalisation of the avant-garde.

Aside from Leonetto Cappiello's frontispiece, and Apollinaire's own marginal doodles on the manuscript, 'Le Poète assassiné' was never illustrated during Apollinaire's lifetime. However, two subsequent sets of illustrations do exist: one a set of lithographs by Raoul Dufy, published in 1926, the other a set of linocuts by Pierre Alechinsky, undertaken during his time at the decorative arts school of La Cambre, Brussels, in 1948. Through these illustrations, and bearing in mind Alechinsky's insistence that "it was always about the image in situ, alongside the writing", this paper will consider the ways in which poetry and painting, text and image, artists and writers are combined in 'Le Poète assassiné', which culminates in the creation of a monument to the assassinated poet, 'a profound statue made of nothing, like poetry and like glory'.

Claire Ghëerardyn, École Normale Supérieure (Ulm)/ Université de Strasbourg: 'La Révolte des statues: enquête sur un nouveau modèle pour le roman d'art'

Dans *La Fin de Paris ou La Révolte des statues*, paru en 1932, roman illustré de photographies, montages et collages, et qu'il présente comme un « livre d'images », Marcel Sauvage raconte la guerre menée par les statues contre les Parisiens afin de chasser les hommes de la ville. Le narrateur est un journaliste qui infiltre les rangs ennemis déguisé en statue.

La figure de l'artiste est ici absente. Il s'agit d'une autre façon d'écrire sur l'art, très loin des romans d'art du XIXe siècle. Marcel Sauvage présente peut-être un cas limite de roman d'art. Ce ne sont plus les artistes, ou le processus de création, mais les œuvres elles-mêmes qui sont au centre de la fiction. Sauvage anime les statues, les déployant ainsi dans le temps du récit et jouant, avec humour, de l'antinomie du représenté et représentant théorisée par Jakobson. On se demandera si d'autres romans, comme dans le cas des *Jardins Statuaires* de Jacques Abeille (1982), ont suivi cette voie du roman d'art sans l'artiste.

Mais surtout, avec la *Révolte des statues*, c'est le rapport du spectateur à l'œuvre que Sauvage fictionnalise. Derrière sa légèreté, ce roman porte la marque d'une époque qui, face à la statue, est en proie à l'effroi et la fascination. On y trouve des échos à Breton, Chirico, Savinio, Soupault, Desnos, Cocteau, et Apollinaire. *La Fin de Paris* semble jaillir tout entier du cri menaçant poussé d'Aragon dans le *Paysan de Paris*: "C'est de la statuomanie qu'elle périra, l'humanité". Ce rapport d'effroi, où l'œuvre résiste à sa perception, faisait la matière d'épopées romantiques amples et ambitieuses, comme le *Cavalier d'Airain* de Pouchkine, ou "Révolution" dans *Les Quatre Vents de l'Esprit* de Victor Hugo; il se trouve maintenant ramené, sur un mode burlesque, au genre du roman d'anticipation.

L'exemple de *La Fin de Paris* permet donc d'étudier le mode d'être fictionnel du rapport à l'œuvre d'art.

Marcel Sauvage's novel *La Fin de Paris, ou la Révolte des statues*, published in 1932, illustrated with photographs, photomontages and collages, is a « picture book », telling of the war between statues and the inhabitants of Paris. The narrator is a journalist who, disguised as a statue, infiltrates the enemy.

Here, there is no artist figure. This is a different way of writing about art, very far from the art novels of the XIXth century, and *La Fin de Paris* might very well be a borderline case of the art novel genre, since fiction doesn't focus anymore on artists, or even on the process of creation, but on the works of art themselves, and their afterlife. Sauvage animates the statues, develops them in narrative time and fancifully plays with the antinomy of signifying and signified theorised by Jacobson. Did any other text follow that path and tried to be an art novel without an artist? Is it the case for instance of *Les Jardins Statuaires*, by Jacques Abeille (1982)?

Indeed, in *La Révolte des statues*, Sauvage fictionalises not only the statues themselves, but the response of the beholder to the works of art. The lightness of the text barely veils the actual fascination and horror elicited by statues, that were the trademark of Sauvage's age. His novel echoes Breton's, Chirico's, Savinio's, Soupault's, Desnos's, Cocteau's, and Apollinaire's works. *La Fin de Paris* seems to be born from the threatening words screamed in Aragon's *Paysan de Paris*: "Humanity will perish because of statuomanie". In the *Bronze Horseman* by Pouchkine (1833), or in "Revolution" in *Les Quatre Vents de l'Esprit* by Victor Hugo, the frightened response to statues was the fabric of ambitious epics. It is now reduced to the genre of futuristic novel, on a ludicrous mode. One has to investigate how fiction gives an existence to the response to art.

Silvia Loreti, University of Manchester and Courtauld Institute of Art: 'Representation "Beyond Good and Evil" in Gide's *Faux-Monnayeurs*'

Gide's controversial relation with Naturalism, and the debate he entertained with the possibilities of the style to represent the world in his 'only novel', *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, are among the most intriguing characters of this work which is, in fact, a pamphlet on the limits of artistic honesty. In throwing a sceptical look at the contemporary art world, in which representation increasingly evaded the domain of aesthetics to enter the treacherous realm of life, Gide posited himself against Zola's social expectations and revealed to be a fine reader of Nietzsche, who considered art to be the only essence of life.

This paper deals with two intertwined questions raised by the issue of style within *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. The first is Gide's debt to the nineteenth-century art novel and the place of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* within a tradition of literature speaking through the visual arts. Under which socio-historical and cultural conditions did writers increasingly felt the need to address issues of representation through images, rather than words? How did the balance between *pictura* and *poesis* become reversed in avant-garde aesthetics? The moral implications of this reversal are the subject of the second point that I wish to address.

The early 1920s saw the return of leading avant-garde artists, like Picasso, to the figurative tradition, while others, such as the Dadaists portrayed in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, producing iconoclastic gestures. In her famous essay, 'Picasso/Pastiche', Rosalind Krauss drew on Jean-Joseph Goux's argument about the symbolic use of language in *Les Faux-monnayeurs* to use the novel against Picasso's neoclassicist 'hoax strategy' as opposed to Dada sincerity. It is the scope of my paper to question such readings. In contrast to Krauss's belief, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* can, and should be read in the wake of Nietzsche's ambiguous relationship with metaphysics and the resulting difficulty to discern between truth and falsehood, good and evil. The issue of style would then become a positive function in the ethical debate on art, with the classical considered to be a 'more human' style, the sole

capable of representing the complexities of human existence in its openly artificial approach to representation. This paper thus seeks to re-read *Les Faux-monnayeurs* as a landmark art novel that defended the ethical implications of style against the iconoclastic turn of the visual avant-garde.

Kathrin Yacavone, University of Edinburgh: 'Photography and "le jeu des clefs": Barthes, Nadar, Proust'

In Roland Barthes's relatively little known seminar notes 'Proust et la photographie' (1980) he juxtaposes Paul Nadar's nineteenth-century portrait photographs of Marcel Proust's family, friends and acquaintances with the characters of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, who are partly modelled on the 'real-life' people depicted in these images. Re-interpreting the traditional notion of the *roman à clef*, Barthes argues that Nadar's photographs 'lure' the reader into the lived and created worlds of Proust thereby auguring a dynamic interaction between text and image.

Following Barthes, in this paper, I will consider *La recherche* in the light of Nadar's photographs as an early twentieth-century exemplar of the dynamic interaction between photography and (auto)biographical fiction. While the narrative and metaphorical role of photography in Proust's *Recherche* has attracted attention from scholars in recent years, I am more interested in both the creation and reception of the novel, in the light of Nadar's portraits, and in how this speaks to issues of (artistic) self-identity and authorship. Going beyond Barthes, I will historicise the relationship between photographic portraiture and biographical discourse and argue that this multifaceted relation has a much longer and complex history in French literary culture than is often thought, stretching back to the mid-nineteenth century, with the birth of modern photographic portraiture in the work of Félix Nadar (Paul Nadar's father) and the roughly simultaneous invention of the biographical essay on living authors by Sainte-Beuve.

Akane Kawakami, Birkbeck, University of London: 'No fiction please: Time and Photography in Ernaux and Proust'

It is well known that Ernaux's first three works were subtitled 'roman': thereafter, she asked Gallimard to remove the label from the covers of her books. Interestingly, it was after this refusal of fiction – that is, from her fourth work onwards – that the photographic image began to assume a greater role in her work, at first in the form of verbal descriptions of photographs, then as an ideal for writing itself, and culminating in a phototextual work which combines photographs and text (*L'Usage de la photo*). Her most recent book, *Les Années*, does not contain photographs, but each of the sections is inspired by a photograph which is described in detail. In this paper I will examine why, in Ernaux, the photographic image and fiction are set against each other. I will suggest that for Ernaux, their greatest contrast is in how they relate to Time, to our sense of time both inside and outside us. I will then show how Proust experiments also with different configurations of the self, photography and fiction in his search for the essence of time, and conclude by relating the differences between Ernaux and Proust in this regard to their different conceptions of the self.

Geneviève Guetemme, Université d'Orléans: '*Eros mélancolique* de Jacques Roubaud et Anne Françoise Garetta: écriture, photographie et disparition'

Eros mélancolique est un roman qui commence par un échange de messages électroniques entre deux auteurs qui s'effacent derrière un(e) certain(e) AD Clifford. Le personnage principal est un homme hanté par la lumière, la voix d'une femme et un passé qui entreprend une recherche photographique, amoureuse et mémorielle. Il élabore un projet photographique

où chaque cliché, inscrit sur un damier, est déterminé par des règles spatiales et temporelles très strictes. Ce projet n'aboutit pas. L'écriture et l'art (photographique), vus, avec l'abandon du projet, sous l'angle de l'effacement et du renoncement, sont au centre de ce roman.

Or le renoncement, qui n'est pas ici un échec, illustre-t-il une évolution récente de la création en arts plastiques ? L'oscillation entre les genres : de l'histoire d'amour au roman policier, en passant par l'univers oulipien de *La Vie mode d'emploi* de Perec, permet-il, en fait, de créer un roman et une photographie qui ne sont pas ce qu'ils semblent être ? Un roman et une photographie qui disparaissent et qui réapparaissent, où le lacunaire accompagne un travail de cumul et d'échange et où la fragmentation laisse apparaître une absence – visualisée photographiquement par le carré blanc. Un roman où la photographie se retrouve du côté de l'écriture et où un jeu de décomposition-recomposition visualise peut-être la façon dont l'art contemporain appréhende maintenant le temps, l'espace, le monde et l'histoire.

Nella Arambasin, Université de Franche-Comté: 'Artemisia et les brodeuses: Michèle Desbordes, Catherine Weinzaepflen...'

Il s'agira de déconstruire le point de vue du XIXe siècle sur la relation entre le peintre et la création, qui est non seulement masculine, mais où la femme demeure nuisible aussi, lorsqu'elle n'est pas muse ou passive. Autrement dit, on peut se demander si aujourd'hui les écrivaines ne prennent pas le contre-pied de Balzac, Zola ou Goncourt, pour rendre compte d'une forme romanesque française de la création artistique au féminin. Défendue par des écrivains femmes, cette forme romanesque passe par la fiction biographique qui tisse des liens étroits avec l'autobiographie. Si ce genre met en cause l'absence tacite des femmes dans l'histoire de l'art, c'est aussi le propre d'une prise de parole féminine dans la littérature contemporaine.

Élodie Lacroix di Méo, Université de Bordeaux-III: 'Art, Politics and Female Emancipation in Victor Margueritte's Trilogy *La Femme en chemin* (1922-24)'

Victor Margueritte's novels are rarely read today, and most were never published again after World War II. However, his name is associated with the term rendered popular through his famous novel "La Garçonne". Images of the 1920's flapper immediately come to mind together with the erotic images that made him lose his Legion of Honour. The fact that the novel forms part of a feminist trilogy entitled "La Femme en Chemin" is rarely mentioned, and neither is the complexity of the Garçonne he chose to describe. Surprisingly, most art historians who cite the novel as an example of the jazz age female emancipation fail to mention the fact that the "Garçonne", Monique Lerbier, is an artist, and the fact that art plays a major role in the other volumes of the trilogy. The parallel between the Garçonne's personal trajectory as a woman and her artistic practice illustrates some interesting aspects of how the decorative arts could be perceived during the 1920s, while the author also establishes an artistic hierarchy based on his political views. Victor Margueritte values art both as a means of personal emancipation for women, since it is presented as a profession enabling them to attain financial autonomy, and as a means of political action, since he believed it had the power to spread ideas and therefore gradually change society.

Eva Sansavior, Oxford University: 'Fiction into Art/ Art into Fiction: Literature, Art and Criticism in the work of Maryse Condé'

A defining feature of the literary oeuvre of the Guadeloupean novelist Maryse Condé has been its marked intertextual practice articulated through its continual blurring of a range of boundaries – generic, cultural and social. Through a reading of two texts that feature artist-protagonists, *Les derniers rois mages* and *Histoire de la femme cannibale*, I track the ongoing

process of reflection on the relationship between literature and art elaborated in the author's work, a preoccupation that I will suggest represents a key strand of the author's complex intertextual practice. In keeping with the tradition of literary engagement with art as theoretical discipline and practice that attains institutional dominance from the nineteenth century onwards in France, the author has used a shifting idea of 'literature' and the material literary text itself as starting points and frames for a process of literary-critical investigation. In this respect, Condé's engagement with this relationship undoubtedly owes much to the efforts of French poets and writers from Rimbaud and Baudelaire to Proust and Barthes to give a theoretical form to this process as well as to release its attendant creative charge in their literary work. However, what is distinctive about the author's reflection on the relationship between literature and art is the ways in which it establishes a multi-directional dialogue between French, European and Caribbean literary and artistic traditions. I will argue that this dialogue presents novel ways of re-imagining and also exploiting creatively questions concerning the relationships between art and criticism, originality and influence, representation and artistic freedom. Such a dialogue may ultimately also suggest possibilities for a radical re-mapping of the intellectual and cultural genealogy in which discussions concerning the relationship between art and literature in French Studies have traditionally been located.

Jean Duffy, University of Edinburgh: 'In the Wake of Trauma: Visualising the Unspeakable in Marie Darrieussecq and Hélène Lenoir'

In the course of the last thirty years or so trauma studies has been one of the fastest growing interdisciplinary fields. For a number of reasons relating in part to the history of France and its colonies in the twentieth century, to various social and cultural changes and to the proliferation of autofictional and autobiographical works, contemporary French prose narrative has proved to be a very fertile area of enquiry. In the large body of critical work on trauma in French fiction, autofiction and autobiography published in the course of the last three decades, the photograph has figured very prominently. However, while the privileged position of photography in trauma studies is fully justified by the wealth of the primary material, the references to other visual media have attracted much less attention. This paper will address the question of the roles played by painting and installation art in the evocation of trauma and traumatic sequelae through an indicative comparative analysis of two novels by contemporary French writers – Marie Darrieussecq's *White* and Helene Lenoir's *Elle va partir* – which each explore a nexus of themes relating to remembered and projected child-harm, damaging mothers, the intergenerational transmission of behavioural patterns, and the limits of verbal articulability. Of particular interest will be dynamics of the interaction between literary and visual allusion in these works and the various ways in which the authors draw upon the paintings of Mark Rothko and the installation art of Bill Viola to express the unspeakable and the unthinkable, to mirror the psychological processes undergone by their protagonists and to generate elements of their fictional environment.

Chiara Falangola, University of British Columbia: 'Pour une esthétique de la synthèse: Du jardin d'eau de Claude Monet au *Jardin des Plantes* de Claude Simon'

En 1893 Claude Monet déménage à Giverny et à partir de 1894, il commence à cultiver des nymphéas japonais dans le bassin de sa propriété. De 1895 jusqu`à sa mort en 1926, ce jardin d'eau sera le motif principal de ses tableaux, qui seront conçus en séries. La deuxième partie du *Jardin des Plantes* de Claude Simon est en partie construite sur un *cut-up* proustien : l'épisode des mouettes-nymphéas lors de la visite de la Marquise de Cambremer à Balbec dans *Sodome et Gomorrhe*. Le fragment de la fille en rose entre les ruines de Berlin – contribution simonienne au binôme *mouettes-nymphéas* – produit une image-carrefour, où se croisent plusieurs chemins textuels : l'intertexte proustien des couchers de soleil, les

nénuphars de Claude Monet, la poétique de l'instant et de la simultanéité et la réflexion sur l'Histoire. L'image de la fille en rose et les implications mimétiques de l'esthétique du jardin chez les deux artistes permettent de considérer les séries des *Nymphéas*, non seulement en tant qu'hypotexte premier de quelques fragments de la deuxième partie du roman, mais aussi en tant que double pictural de la pratique romanesque illustrée par et dans *Le Jardin des Plantes* en son entièreté. Ce parallèle d'artiste, sans doute le moins explicite du roman si on pense aux références à Gastone Novelli, à Picasso ou à Nicolas Poussin, permet d'aborder des enjeux fondamentaux de la composition et des thématiques du roman-jardin de Claude Simon.

Gavin Parkinson, Courtauld Institute of Art: 'The Delvaux Mystery'

Meant to signal in its parodic title both the causal, deductive conventions of academic art history, and those of the detective story (which are dismantled by the novels I will be discussing), my paper will look initially at some of the paintings of the Belgian artist Paul Delvaux (1897-1994), and briefly discuss the uses to which that *oeuvre* has been put by several of the pioneers of the twentieth century novel, such as Michel Butor, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Claude Simon, Julio Cortázar, and J. G. Ballard. It will go on to speculate as to why so many French novelists from the 1950s who interrogated specifically *narrative* form, together with those inspired by their example, responded to Delvaux's work in their writing. Asking whether any gain can be made in art history's knowledge and understanding of art by viewing it back through the fiction or poetry generated by it (Robbe-Grillet's uses of the work of René Magritte, for example; Georges Perec's of Paul Klee), I move on to inquire into how fiction and poetry might inflect that discipline at the level of *style*, and ask what the genre implications of such writing might be for art history, in which writing and style have had such well-defined boundaries and limitations. My paper furthers its discussion of whether elements recently introduced by the novel might perform evaluative tasks on art previously unattainable to academic art writing by airing my own recent attempts to draw upon components of the postmodern novel to subvert the narrow rationalism and representationalism traditionally demanded by academic art history.

Catherine Howell, University of Melbourne: 'The Deceptive Consolations of Art: Jean-Pierre Milovanoff's *Le Maître des paons*'

Jean-Pierre Milovanoff (1940 -) is the author of fourteen novels, as well as autobiography, poetry, plays, children's literature, and other writings. In 1997 Milovanoff was awarded the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens and the Prix du Jury Jean Giono for *Le Maître des paons*, a novel set in the Mediterranean landscape of his youth, which deals with themes of art, memory, and loss. This paper will investigate Milovanoff's depiction of the deceptive consolations of art, focusing particularly on his use of poetic language.

Set in the 1960s, the novel follows the travails of its unreliable narrator, a young archaeology student, Sacha Malinoff, who falls tenaciously in love with a fellow student, Cynthia. Sacha's unsuccessful pursuit of Cynthia leads to his discovery of her family domain, Le Grand Bouquaud, with its dominant figure, Cynthia's father, Nino Salomon. Milovanoff's depiction of Salomon sits squarely within the French literary and cultural figuration of the artist as obsessive, recalling figures such as Frenhofer (as realised in both Balzac's *Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu*, 1831, and Rivette's *La Belle noiseuse*, 1991) and Zola's Claude from *L'Œuvre* (1886). Salomon is an artist, a hermit-like obsessive, who paints nothing but the peacocks he keeps in the grounds. The novel begins with a preface that appears to offer a philosophy of art as consolation. 'L'Eden n'[est] pas fermé pour toujours', the narrator promises us, it may still be found, 'dispersé au milieu des choses', and that the artist's task is this make this Eden 'visible à tous'. Yet as the novel unfolds, the meaning of Eden, for both artist and audience, is significantly complicated. Salomon's relentless pursuit of his motif raises important questions for the reader about the meaning and value of art, and the possible

justifications of artistic commitment. As imaginative motif, the peacock comes to represent the exotic; lost innocence; and the distractions and deceptions of memory.

Edouard Rolland, University de Paris-I Panthéon Sorbonne: '*Lorsque j'étais une œuvre d'art* d'Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt: Fiction fantastique d'une dérive réelle de l'art contemporain'

« Lorsque j'étais une œuvre d'art » d'Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt est une satire romancée d'un jeune homme nommé Adam qui, au moment même où il s'apprêtait à mettre fin à ses jours, se voit convaincre par Zeus-Peter Lama, un artiste *à la mode*, d'être transformé en œuvre d'art. Adam lui cède ainsi par contrat sa vie et son corps pour être glorifié en tant qu'objet d'art. Remodelé en *joli monstre* au mépris de toute considération et respect de son humanité, Adam devient une œuvre s'exposant sur son socle, sous le regard du public oscillant entre contemplation et malaise, admiration et rejet.

Si le ton léger et distrayant de l'ouvrage nous entraîne dans une aventure aussi plaisante que fantasque, le roman de Schmitt n'en est pas moins une pertinente critique des dérives réelles et dérangeantes de l'Art contemporain.

En effet, au cœur d'un système de plus en plus mercantile, certains artistes ont rapidement compris dès le début du XX^{e} siècle que la pratique du scandale pouvait leur offrir une prolifique notoriété, afin de *faire parler d'eux* et, par conséquent, de *faire monter* leurs renommées comme leurs valeurs marchandes.

Cette pratique réelle et évidemment officieuse demeure justement dénoncée dans le roman de Schmitt. *« Puisque le scandale est un accélérateur médiatique* écrit-il, *l'artiste cherche l'idée qui choque »* afin de manipuler les médias à des fins publicitaires.

Que ce soit dans la réalité du champ de l'Art ou la fiction du roman de Schmitt, le scandale n'est plus nuisible ; il fait au contraire vendre. Les artistes ne subissent plus le scandale qui bannissait ; aujourd'hui, ils le provoquent et le revendiquent consciemment comme démarche artistique, les portées du scandale étant parfois plus importantes que la qualité même de l'œuvre (devenue quasiment secondaire).

Fiction et réalité s'interpénètrent donc dans le roman de Schmitt, au sein duquel les œuvres imaginaires (aussi malsaines que scandaleuses) renvoient de façon effrayante à de véritables pratiques artistiques, bafouant sans scrupule la morale et l'éthique jusqu'à notre propre humanité.

Dans quelles mesures Schmitt explore-t-il de façon fictionnelle la réalité préoccupante d'une certaine dérive de l'Art contemporain, se revendiquant au nom de l'Art sans frontières ni limites ?

En nous référant tant au roman qu'aux différentes et réelles pratiques de l'Art contemporain vouées au scandale (souvent publicitaire), nous verrons que l'histoire du livre, oscillant toujours entre fiction et réalité, s'articule autour d'une ambiance aussi légère que dérangeante, aussi fantasque que vraisemblable, afin de dénoncer les dérives et autres scandales de l'Art contemporain.

David Gascoigne (University of St Andrews): 'Perec's *La Vie mode d'emploi* : or, How to take on painting and win'

Some notes by Perec on his reaction to paintings and on his collaboration with painters suggest a complex, but potentially conflictual relationship. This paper will seek to show that in his fictional masterpiece *La Vie mode d'emploi* (1978) Perec pursues an elaborate confrontation on many levels with paintings and painters, whose prestige he recognises as a rival to writing, which is thus challenged to reassert its primacy. Some 'Old Master' paintings are dismantled to provide details for insertion into quite alien contexts in Perec's textual construction, and he also pursues the classical strategies of ekphrasis to create imaginary paintings through the power of language. His central narrative incorporates the failure, in

various ways, of a number of artists and the annihilation or non-realisation of their creations. Strategically, the structure of Perec's whole project in this text can be read as a calculated invasion, by the writer, of the domain of spatial representation seen since Lessing as proper to painting. By exploring both the infinitely vast and the infinitely detailed poles of literary description, Perec appears determined to prove its near-omnipotence in the face of its formidable rival.

Katie Jones, University of Nottingham: '"Brisure et continuité": painting and film in Muriel Barbery's *L'Élégance du hérisson*'

Muriel Barbery's bestselling novel about the unlikely friendship between its two narrators – middle-aged concierge Renée and the precocious and suicidal twelve-year-old Paloma, a resident of the building she works in – has divided critics, being variously described as a moving and profound meditation on social class and 'la revanche des petits sur les gros' (*Libération*), and as a deeply sentimental novel with philosophical pretentions, lacking in any real narrative direction. Analysis of Barbery's treatment of art, and more specifically of aesthetic beauty, sheds light on these contrasting readings. Appreciation of beauty whether in the arts or everyday life is central to the plot in bringing Renée, Paloma, and new resident M. Ozu together, cutting across boundaries of class, age and nationality. Discussions of various artworks are also used to manipulate the pace and structure of the narrative. However, long sections of philsophical analysis tend to produce a didactic tone, and the characters' conclusions about the 'essence' of beauty and art appear somewhat reductive.

Barbery's two narrators touch upon an eclectic range of genres in their quest for aesthetic beauty, including nineteenth-century Russian novels, Japanese poetry, dance, choral music, German phenomenology and the piano works of Erik Satie. However, by considering both thematic aspects of the novel's artistic motifs and their formal interaction with narrative structure, this paper will argue that the novel's engagement with the *visual* arts – most notably seventeenth-century Dutch still life painting and the films of Yasujirõ Ozu, which will provide my two key examples – is by far the most successful.

Elisabeth Grodek, McMaster University, 'De l'autre côté du point de fuite : éclosion d'un sous-texte visuel dans quelques romans d'art contemporains et ses implications didactiques'

Une longue tradition d'influences mutuelles entre l'art de la parole et les arts de l'image continue à modeler le paysage littéraire français aux vingtième et vingt et unième siècles. Les allusions à l'art, aux artistes et à leurs modèles maintiennent leur rôle des déclencheurs de stratégies narratives, des générateurs de thèmes et des signes de reconnaissance des questionnements qui préoccupent chaque époque.

Il nous semble, en même temps, apercevoir dans certains de ces romans une légère modification dans le fonctionnement du référent visuel par rapport à celui qui caractérisait le nouveau roman par exemple, et, par conséquent, une nouvelle relation qui s'ébauche entre le texte et l'image. Nous observons notamment, la présence d'un sous-texte visuel dont le statut est virtuel et l'actualisation difficile sans une lecture multimédiatique. Ce sous-texte visuel, qui se déploie comme une doublure du texte verbal, ouvre accès à un nouvel espace de réception et d'interprétation, créé par une synergie de signes verbaux et visuels. Nous nous proposons d'étudier les mécanismes du fonctionnement de ce référent, en nous inspirant du concept d'*interpretant* de Peirce. Des extraits de romans de Pierre Michon nous serviront à retracer les nouvelles stratégies de lecture auxquelles ces romans invitent. Nous terminerons par une réflexion sur l'importance des textes encourageant une lecture interdisciplinaire et intermédiale pour le processus de l'acquisition du savoir à l'époque où la «pensée réticulaire» devient une capacité cognitive de plus en plus appréciée.

David Houston Jones, University of Exeter: 'Dado and Claude Louis-Combet: Archival Arts'

Oiseaux d'Irène (2007) constitutes the most significant collaboration between Dado (Miodrag Djuric) and the contemporary author Claude Louis-Combet. The project is directly inspired by Némirovsky's *Suite française,* and indicates a particular form of memorial and archival encounter. The concern with the monstrous and the grotesque recalls Louis-Combet's *Dadomorphes et dadopathes* (1992) and Dado's *cosmogonie* of the 1980s and 1990s. At the same time, though, Némirovsky's work as a memorial site unlocks a deep-seated concern with atrocity and with archival memory, and situates the monstrous within this concern. In this paper I consider the occasional collaboration between Dado and Claude Louis-Combet in the light of the archival, whether defined in terms of memory and the testimonial (Agamben), classificatory systems derived from libraries and museums or in terms of the installation as memorial space (Paver). *Blockhaus* (2003-6) exemplifies the latter tendency, situating expression within a space apparently characterised by obsolence and redundancy. *Oiseaux d'Irène,* meanwhile, is the most complete realisation of the archival project, tapping into the archive's troubled transmission of memory and crucially inspired by an archival text. *Suite française* subsists only as an archival trace until its belated publication in 2004. Dado's subsequent letter to Denise Epstein, an archival document, is published within *Oiseaux d'Irène.* The work's composition is accompanied by another form of archival practice: the constitution of *le fonds Dado* at IMEC. Dado's first contact with the institutional archive which was eventually to contain his work signals a standpoint of apparent naivety to archival knowledge and archival processes. He claims to have initiated an 'archival' approach to his own work and its documentation in the following years: 'il "ADN-ise" des catalogues anciens ou récents ou tout autre imprimé le concernant'. In contrast to this advertised viewpoint, I argue that Dado's work in fact shows a heightened awareness of the archival, which constitutes a privileged form or aesthetic from *Oiseaux d'Irène* to Dado's *Blockhaus* project.

Lynsey Russell-Watts, University of Nottingham: 'Stranger than Fiction? The Intermingling of Art and Life in Sophie Calle's *Prenez soin de vous*'

Abstract tbc